

REPLY

To: Examiner of the Patent Office

1. Identification of the International Application: PCT/JP02/09815

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5. Content of Reply:

The gist of the present invention is to provide a masking member used for protecting part(s) on which paint should not be coated.

Said masking member of the present invention is made of a polymer alloy having a sea-island structure, and in said polymer alloy, polyolefin forms a continuous phase, to provide excellent moldability being equal to that of polyolefin, and engineering plastic forms a dispersed phase, to improve the heat resistance and mechanical strength of said masking member.

The reference cited in document 1 (JP07-144161 A) discloses a masking member made of

a polymer alloy of engineering plastic and other thermoplastic resin(s). Nevertheless, in said document 1, it is not disclosed that said polymer alloy has a sea-island structure.

The reference cited in document 2 (JP2000-185251 A) discloses a masking cover using a material in which a rubber-like elastomer, compatibility aid agent, and the like, are mixed in with a syndiotactic styrenic polymer, nevertheless, the polymer alloy of polyolefin and engineering plastic, and the use of said compatibility aid agent in said polymer alloy are not disclosed in this document.

The reference cited in document 3 (JP2001-25690) discloses a masking member made of a polymer alloy of engineering plastic and other thermoplastic resin(s), nevertheless, the polymer alloy of polyolefin and engineering plastic selected in claim 1 of the present invention are not disclosed in this document, so that the sea-island structure of said polymer alloy is also undisclosed.

It may be well known that some polymer alloys have a sea-island structure. Nevertheless, in the present invention, polyolefin in particular is selected as a continuous phase, to provide said polymer alloy with excellent moldability, and more importantly, the engineering plastic selected in claim 1 is used as a dispersed phase, to improve the heat resistance and mechanical strength of said polymer alloy, so that the polyolefin having less heat resistance and less mechanical strength is used as a continuous phase in said polymer alloy.

Accordingly, experts in this field can not easily conceive of the use of said polymer alloy having a sea-island structure, in which said polyolefin is in a continuous phase, and said engineering plastic is in a dispersed phase, as a material for the masking member referred to in documents 1, 2 and 3.